

EXHIBIT 17

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND**

STATE OF MARYLAND; STATE OF DELAWARE; STATE OF CALIFORNIA; STATE OF COLORADO; STATE OF ARIZONA; STATE OF CONNECTICUT; DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, STATE OF HAWAI'I; STATE OF ILLINOIS; OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR *ex rel.* Andy Beshear, in his official capacity as Governor of the COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY; STATE OF MAINE; COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS; PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN; STATE OF MINNESOTA; STATE OF NEVADA; STATE OF NEW JERSEY; STATE OF NEW MEXICO; STATE OF NEW YORK; STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA; STATE OF OREGON; JOSH SHAPIRO, in his official capacity as Governor of the COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA; STATE OF RHODE ISLAND; STATE OF VERMONT; STATE OF WASHINGTON; STATE OF WISCONSIN;

Plaintiffs,

v.

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE, operating as AmeriCorps; and JENNIFER BASTRESS TAHMASEBI, in her official capacity as Interim Head of the Corporation for National and Community Service;

Defendants.

DECLARATION OF ELIZABETH MCGUINNESS

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I, Elizabeth McGuinness, hereby declare as follows:

1. I am a resident of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. I am over the age of 18 and have personal knowledge of all the facts stated herein, except to those matters stated upon

information and belief; as to those matters, I believe them to be true. If called as a witness, I could and would testify competently to the matters set forth below.

2. I am currently employed by the Massachusetts Service Alliance as the Chief Executive Officer.

3. The Massachusetts Service Alliance is a private non-profit organization founded in 1991 that builds the organizational capacity of hundreds of Massachusetts nonprofits, schools, and agencies through providing funding, training, and resources centered on volunteerism and service. Our three main program areas include AmeriCorps, Commonwealth Corps, and Volunteer Initiatives and, in addition, we provide extensive training and technical assistance opportunities to support successful volunteer engagement and management.

4. By Executive Order No. 472, the Massachusetts Service Alliance is designated as an “alternative administrative entity” for purposes of 42 U.S.C. § 12638(a)(2) and serves as the Massachusetts State Commission that manages AmeriCorps grants in Massachusetts. In that role, the Massachusetts Service Alliance performs the duties specified in 42 U.S.C. § 12638(e).

5. As Chief Executive Officer, I have accountability for oversight of the federal grants received from AmeriCorps and, as such, I have personal knowledge of the matters set forth below.

6. The Massachusetts Service Alliance receives and manages grant funds from AmeriCorps (formally known as the Corporation for National and Community Service), including AmeriCorps State and National grants and Volunteer Generation Fund grants, awards and disburses subawards throughout the Commonwealth, monitors subrecipients for performance and compliance with grant requirements, provides training and technical assistance for subrecipients, and functions as a liaison between AmeriCorps and Massachusetts subrecipients.

7. The Massachusetts Service Alliance currently manages 31 grants for AmeriCorps State and National subrecipients, including nonprofit organizations, local governments, and institutions of higher education located across Massachusetts. Subrecipients use the funds to recruit, manage, pay, and train AmeriCorps members (who receive a modest living allowance from these subawarded funds to cover expenses such as housing, food, transportation, and other living costs; as well as health insurance if they are full-time); fund program operations and other related costs (such as personnel to supervise members and oversee program activities and operations, training and evaluation costs, and supplies); and monitor and support service locations to ensure compliant and effective service delivery. The Massachusetts Service Alliance retains 2% or less of the funds awarded to our subrecipients to pay for our own personnel who manage the grantmaking process, provide training and technical assistance to all subrecipients, and monitor their activities to ensure federal compliance. Many subrecipients host AmeriCorps members at partner organizations, which provide service sites for those AmeriCorps members, supervise regular service, and verify hours and performance measures. Combined, these programs bring in more than \$31.1 million to Massachusetts—nearly \$19.8 million in direct AmeriCorps grant funding and \$11.3 million in the value of the Segal Education Award that members receive upon successful completion of service, which can be used to pay for educational expenses or to repay student loans.

8. The AmeriCorps members serving through these programs provide tremendous support to Massachusetts communities. In the 2023-2024 program year alone, the 31 AmeriCorps programs supported by the Massachusetts Service Alliance engaged 1,146 AmeriCorps members who provided the Commonwealth with more than 1,026,700 hours of service. Through their commitment, they provided support to 52,682 direct beneficiaries and engaged more than 7,350

additional volunteers. Approximately 75 cities and towns across Massachusetts are served by the current cohort of AmeriCorps members enrolled in the 2024-25 program year. AmeriCorps programs address our communities' most pressing needs in the areas of education, economic opportunity, healthy futures, and environmental stewardship. AmeriCorps members are preparing today's students for tomorrow's jobs through in-school and after-school support programs; connecting individuals and families to the services they need to thrive, such as housing and health care; rebuilding communities after disasters; and leading conservation efforts.

9. The Massachusetts Service Alliance also manages the Volunteer Generation Fund grant, which has allowed the Commonwealth to invest in volunteer engagement supports and management practices. For the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 program years, we received \$372,222 annually to support broader volunteer engagement efforts through: (1) in-depth capacity building efforts that build and enhance the ability of organizations across Massachusetts to successfully engage volunteers to expand their impact; (2) targeted subawards to engage volunteers in programming to assist career exploration efforts among youth; and (3) focused training and resources for K-12 schools and after school programs to support service and service-learning activities.

10. Through the Massachusetts Service Alliance's Volunteer Generation Fund grant, a wide range of nonprofit organizations receive intensive capacity building and training support, as well as direct financial support for their volunteer engagement efforts. In the 2023-2024 program year, 26 organizations received Volunteer Generation Fund grants and/or training and capacity-building assistance, and these resources supported 16,854 youth through the engagement of 3,206 volunteers.

11. On April 16, 2025, I learned that a significant number of AmeriCorps Agency staff were placed on administrative leave. I later came to learn that this action affected approximately 85% of the Agency's staff, leaving only a small number of employees left in each department.

12. The affected staff include portfolio managers and regional personnel who provided training, oversight, and technical assistance to the Massachusetts Service Alliance staff responsible for managing AmeriCorps federal grant funding. The federal staff played an integral role in grant management, performance oversight, and financial administration. As a result, at this time, we do not have a direct point of contact within the AmeriCorps agency.

13. The loss of AmeriCorps staff also will lead to delays in the agency's grantmaking efforts, including AmeriCorps State and National grants (both competitive and formula funding), Volunteer Generation Fund grants, and funds that support the infrastructure of the state service commissions across the country – the Commission Support Grant and Commission Investment funds. We currently receive \$599,883 in Commission Support Grant funding and \$616,773 in a Commission Investment Fund grant. We use these funds to support capacity building and as well as to provide training and technical assistance to our 31 AmeriCorps programs to increase their effectiveness. In response to Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for FY2025, we applied for a Commission Support Grant in the amount of \$403,999 and a Commission Investment Fund grant in the amount of \$244,911. According to the NOFOs, the grants will be awarded by June 20, 2025. The impact of a delay to the grant making and award process will be devastating – both for programs and the Massachusetts Service Alliance, as they affect our ability to fulfill our responsibilities as a state commission on service and volunteerism.

14. On Friday, April 25, 2025, I received two notices from Acting Agency Head Jennifer Bastress Tahmasebi that informed us that the following AmeriCorps grants had been

terminated: (1) our Volunteer Generation Fund grant; (2) 17 of the 31 grants that we subaward to AmeriCorps programs in Massachusetts; and (3) 2 AmeriCorps planning grants we award to subrecipients to develop new AmeriCorps programs. In total, \$7,978,894 in federal funding was terminated: \$372,222 for the current program year of the Volunteer Generation Fund grant (which was expected to continue for a subsequent program year at an additional \$372,222 award level), \$7,031,531 in 17 grants to AmeriCorps subrecipients, \$432,000 in additional funds allocated towards supporting our subrecipients in 2025-2026, and \$143,141 across 2 planning grants.

15. The affected organizations include: the City of Lawrence; Franklin County DIAL SELF (which lost two AmeriCorps program subawards); Framingham State University; Social Capital; Perkins School for the Blind; Boston Medical Center; LUK Crisis Center; Walker; Citizen Schools; Boys & Girls Club of MetroSouth; Barnstable County; Greenagers; TerraCorps; Student Conservation Association; Teach Western Mass; United Way of Massachusetts Bay; Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity; and Northeastern University. The impacted programs, many of which place members with partner organizations to expand the footprint of AmeriCorps across Massachusetts, provide direct support at 186 local service sites and were expected to support more than 14,000 direct beneficiaries. Many of these AmeriCorps members have been serving the last eight months or more tutoring struggling students, providing a safe environment for youth in afterschool programs, supporting the mental health needs of our young people, and responding to recent storms and other disasters.

16. Specifically, the notice related to the AmeriCorps subawards stated, in part: “Effective immediately, the AmeriCorps award subrecipient(s) included in the attached spreadsheet is/are being terminated per 2 CFR 200.340(a)(4) because it has been determined that

the award no longer effectuates agency priorities. You must immediately cease all award activities. This is a final agency action and is not administratively appealable.”

17. We received this notice after business hours on Friday evening, April 25. On Saturday, April 26, members of the Massachusetts Service Alliance staff met to review the impact of the terminated grants and to prepare to notify the affected programs. On Sunday morning, April 27, I sent out individual emails to the authorized representatives and primary program and fiscal contacts at the terminated programs to communicate the termination. On Monday, April 28, we hosted a video call with the impacted programs to further discuss the implications of the termination. Subrecipient organizations were confused and heartbroken to learn of these decisions and expressed significant concerns about the harm that would result to AmeriCorps members, program staff, community partners, and the communities they serve. In addition, they had many time-sensitive questions—most of which we did not have immediate answers to as this was unprecedented—which only served to reinforce feelings of confusion and chaos.

18. On Wednesday, April 30, we responded to both grant termination notices to object to these actions and notify AmeriCorps of our intent to appeal the termination decisions. To date, there has been no response to that message.

19. Also on Wednesday, April 30, we attempted to notify AmeriCorps regarding a technical issue we were encountering that was preventing us from submitting required financial reports that were due that day. We contacted the Help Desk and opened a ticket to log the issue. Normally, we would have submitted this explanation and ticket number to our Portfolio Manager, who was among the AmeriCorps agency staff who were placed on administrative leave (and later received a RIF notice), so we instead submitted an email (sent to Northeast@AmeriCorps.gov) to explain the delay in submission and provide the ticket number. We emailed this address as we have

heard from colleagues in other states this is now the best way to communicate with remaining AmeriCorps staff. To date, there has been no communication from AmeriCorps about where and how to communicate with remaining staff on such matters, and we have not received a response to this message.

20. The Massachusetts Service Alliance does not have the financial resources to compensate for the cancellation of nearly \$8 million in funding or to offer comparable benefits to service members in the absence of federal funding. As a result, delays in or loss of AmeriCorps funding will lead to the termination of AmeriCorps members' living allowances without members being eligible to file for unemployment in Massachusetts and loss of health care benefits, which is especially crucial for members with serious or chronic health conditions. In addition, members serving in two residential programs face the risk of homelessness as their AmeriCorps programs not only provided their living stipends, but also their housing.

21. Moreover, these cuts will result in immediate impacts to the projects and communities that relied on AmeriCorps members' service, including projects facing imminent termination and service beneficiaries losing access to AmeriCorps-funded services. It will also have a detrimental effect on the AmeriCorps program as a whole, tarnishing its reputation and discouraging individuals from serving in the future. Further, the Massachusetts Service Alliance will be directly affected by losing funds that pay staff salaries and support service and volunteer engagement projects across the Commonwealth.

22. Finally, the long-term impact of these disruptions is significant. The active involvement of community members to address their communities' needs is fundamental to a strong and healthy Commonwealth. Through these important programs, the Massachusetts Service Alliance is able to engage a wide range of individuals in service opportunities, including K-12

students, high school graduates unsure of their next steps, young adults seeking meaningful opportunities to serve and develop professional skills, and older adults looking to use a lifetime of knowledge to improve their community. If left unaddressed, the gaps left by the loss of these resources may have a long-term negative effect on the civic health of our Commonwealth.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on May 1, 2025, at Boston, Massachusetts.



Elizabeth McGuinness
Chief Executive Officer
Massachusetts Service Alliance